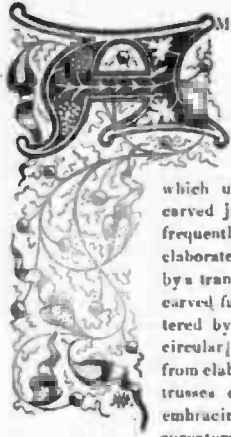


# The Builder.

No. XXVII.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1844.



AMONG the ancient carved doorways still remaining in the metropolis, are many of the shell-pattern, which usually consist of carved jambs and lintels, frequently containing an elaborate door surmounted by a transom and a curious carved sun-light, and sheltered by a far-projecting circular pediment, rising from elaborately decorated trusses or consoles, and embracing beneath the curvature and projection of the pediment a spherical semi-dome, the whole concave surface of which is fashioned as a shell; frequently, however, armorial charges, cyphers, and other decorations, are there placed with a freedom of fancy which has no bounds. Choice specimens of this description of doorways are still to be found in Abchurch-yard, Lawrence Pountney-lane, and many obscure places in the city of London; in fact, he who will take the trouble to go up almost any avenue, the most obscure within the ancient part of the city, will be well rewarded by discoveries to him and to the greater part of the world entirely new, and of which little, if any thing, is to be found in print or manuscript. The writings by which these freeholds and tenures are holden, while they are singularly exact in the enumeration of "posts, pales, and wydraughts," of which some of them have none, mention not a word of their carvings, and their other beauties; so that the tenants in possession may dispose of the whole to the nearest dealer in old building-materials, and no difference be by the writings discoverable. Roud-lane, Mark-lane, Mincing-lane, Tower-street, Crutched-filars, and Leadenhall-street, are perhaps the richest in ancient beauties: almost every gateway, court, and outlet from these affords a display of the kind: they are most particularly to be found in these localities where the London merchants during more than a century immediately after the fire of London were wont to reside, and bestow a part of their great riches upon their united places of residence and business; many of these civic haunts are now either destroyed or are vulgarized by modern alterations or by sheer ignorance. Still, however, remains many an ancient mansion-house with its decorated front, its quaint, rich doorway ascended by a noble flight of steps, its more ample outer gateway, and its office-buildings disposed around the court.

Among these buildings still remain some doorways of the kind which we are at present describing. In St. Martin's-lane, Westminster, still exists a fine and very original specimen; in St. James's-walk, behind Clerkenwell Church, is another, though inferior; and in the nook of Clerkenwell-close, opposite a small public-house, bearing the sign of "The

Jolly Coopers," existed a noble specimen of the same sort, belonging to a house which fell down through age and neglect, but occupied by the then parish clerk, ancient Penry, a notable character of the neighbourhood, and who so from thence ejected took shelter for many years in Bishop Burnet's house in St. John's-square,\* from whose immense nasal pyramid (a rival of the tomb of Caius Cestus) though baseless, the elected parochial amen came with thunder enough for a parish of its then forty thousand souls.

Kensington, Fulham, Chelsea, Paddington, Hampstead, Highgate, Islington, Hoxton, Hackney, Bethnal-green, Mile-end, White-chapel, Goodman's-fields, Wapping, Aldgate, and some of the close parts of Southwark, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Deptford, Greenwich, and other suburbs of the metropolis, contain many peculiar and worthy specimens, which should be delineated before the reckless hand of the improver supercedes them with his coarse and vulgar work in pine or plaster, ignorantly designed and ignorantly applied. And while we are upon this subject, we must not forget to notice that Walthamstow contains not a few specimens of fine character, execution, and preservation. And we earnestly advise those who have leisure and inclination to make a doorway pilgrimage; the collection to be thus obtained would repay the trouble: and it should be remembered that these form a widely varied class of architecture, which rose and fell within a century, having previously no prototype, and leaving no like successor; and even the most dry matter-of-fact person will admit the beauty of fancy which they exhibit, whether it have outbreak in door-jambs, as in Serle-street, Lincoln's-inn; or in consoles, as opposite the House of Correction, Coldhath-fields, or in Red Lion-street, Clerkenwell; whether it appear in shelters, as in Queen-square, Westminster, and in Well-street, Hackney; or in friezes and lintels, as in St. John's Church, and St. John's Chapel, already mentioned, or in fanlights, as at Walthamstow.

There is, however, another and quite different class, worthy of observation—doorways of gauged-work in red brick; of these the Temple, Fleet-street, contains many fine specimens, some of them in such preservation as to appear fabricated but yesterday, these are principally in King's-bench-walk and Hare-court. But wherever such are to be found, they should be most carefully delineated, and their several jointings should be marked: and, lest we forget the subject, it will be well for us to remember that among the many towns and villages which contain specimens of fine ancient brick-work, may be mentioned Farnham, in Surrey, where is to be seen a mansion fronted with gauged brick-work, in the form of cornice-mouldings, bolection architraves, and other decorations of very superior execution.

But the metropolis itself is peculiarly rich in this description of work, of which, though their number has of late been greatly reduced; Hanover-square, St. Martin's-lane, Lincoln's-inn-fields, Great Queen-street, Winchester-street, and innumerable other places within the city of London, as also Kensington, and other suburbs, bear proud testimony, and shew how worthy a thing it would be to encourage this honourable style of building, in which a man needs hardly spend in fifty years a farthing on the mural part and external

\* The bishop's marble monument, taken from the former church, now graces the south-west porch of the present church of St. James', Clerkenwell.

decorations of his house; and instead of swamping his income by contagious intercourse with the white-washer and other nasty men, be able liberally to patronize the marble-mason, the skilled joiner, and every other artificer of meritorious cunning, whose right hand is worth reliance upon. This was the klud of work which used to be emphatically termed TRAOX, and which was understood to include fine material, fine workmanship, and the exercise of the artificer's deepest skill; though the term is now most frequently applied to the sale of the largest mere quantity, good or bad, under puffs which, if any one can be found weak enough or dishonest enough to give them utterance in any serious publications, are immediately, to the injury of mankind, put forth as authority.

benplea.

## ELECTION OF SURVEYORS TO THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS WITHIN THE COUNTY OF KENT.

WOOLWICH . . . . . Mr. George Aitchison.  
LEWISHAM . . . . . Mr. Badger.  
GREENWICH . . . . . Mr. Brown.  
CHARLTON, KID . . . . . Mr. Collis.  
BROOK, and LEE . . . . .  
DEPTFORD . . . . . Mr. Martyr.

At a meeting of the District-Surveyors' Association, held on the 5th instant, at the Freemasons' Tavern, forms for the District-Surveyors' returns under the new Act were produced; and Mr. Baker (District Surveyor of St. Pancras) having, through ill-health, resigned the office of secretary to the association, Mr. G. Pownall (District-Surveyor of St. Giles's, and St. George's, Bloomsbury), was appointed during the next year in his stead. A subscription (limited to one guinea each), for a testimonial of respect to Mr. Baker was opened, which immediately amounted to eighteen guineas and a half.

## THE WINDOW-TAX, OR DUTIES ON LIGHT AND VENTILATION.

(From the Westminster Review.)

The window-tax, or duties upon light and ventilation, may be briefly described as the tax which to multitudes of human beings shuts out the sun, and compels them to breathe in darkened rooms a poisoned air. The following is an extract from the evidence printed by the Health of Towns Commissioners,\* with their first report:—

"The window-duties, as now assessed, operate as a premium upon defective construction. The legislature now says to the builder—Plan your houses with as few openings as possible; let every house be ill-ventilated by shutting out the light and air, and as a reward for your ingenuity you shall be subject to a less amount of taxation than your neighbours. The board is of course aware that windows are now charged by a scale; the tax increasing at an average rate of about 8s. 3d. for every window, whether large or small. Hence the number of windows in a house becomes to builders of second and third class houses a very serious consideration. Supposing a house to contain twelve rooms, if, to make these rooms cheerful and pleasant, I have put two windows in each room; and thereby ensured a current of air passing from front to back, the window-tax for that house amounts to 7l. 5s. 9d.; but if I have put but one window to each room, the

\* See the evidence of Mr. W. E. Hickson, Esq., page 224 of the 9th. edition, Vol. II.